

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADANA 000059

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [TU](#) [ADANA](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MARCH 28, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for March 28, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

ZAMAN / HURRIYET / EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM / RADIKAL : The nine-person delegation made up of members from Turkish Parliamentary Commission Probing Semdinli Case started its trip to the southeastern region yesterday (see press summary 03/23). Commission members heard statements of the Semdinli case defendants, namely officers Ali Kaya and Ozcan Ildeniz (and later PKK defector Veysel Ates) for 4.5 hours at the Court Hall in Van when Van Military Jail did not allow commission members to meet defendants at the jail on grounds that there was not much space to host the overcrowded delegation. Officer Ali Kaya reportedly said, "They accuse us of attempting to kill Seferi Yilmaz (Note. Yilmaz is the owner of the bookstore bombed on November 9, 2005 in Semdinli. End Note). We did not do so. If we were to do that, we would not place a bomb at a bookstore in broad daylight. Do you really think that we cannot calculate what would happen to us if we carried out such an action in the middle of the day? Had we planned to kill Yilmaz, there would be thousands of other ways to resort to." When commission members recalled Land Forces Commander Yasar Buyukanit's remarks about Ali Kaya (Note. In the days that followed the Semdinli bombing, Buyukanit had said, "I personally know Ali Kaya. He is a good person." End Note.), Ali Kaya told commission members that he had great respect for Commander Buyukanit and that they together had been in a military operation conducted in northern Iraq. Ali Kaya further said that they had strong evidence to prove their stance and everything would become more transparently evident on the May 4 trial day. Two delegation members separately went to Bitlis, and heard statements from Veysel Ates, who reportedly said that he had no connection with the bombing. Ates said that they were in the car together with the officers when the explosion took place and they barely saved their lives when the incident developed. Commission members will visit Hakkari and Yuksekova today. On Thursday they will go to Semdinli, and finally they will return to Ankara on March 31 to present a report to the presidency of the parliament.

RADIKAL / OZGUR GUNDEM: Hakkari Governor Ayhan Nasuhbeyoglu, conducted local studies in Yuksekova together with the Provincial Jandarma Commander and Security Director concerning the problems of the district. Nasuhbeyoglu said they would extend all the support they could give to the parliamentary commission visiting the region.

HURRIYET: Hakkari Provincial Jandarma Command (HPJC) sent a reported secret circular to Van Prosecutor's Office and claimed that PKK has established a so-called customs gate at the border with Iraq around Semdinli-Horyurek hamlet. Smugglers are reportedly paying customs duty to the PKK members at entrances and exits at the so-called border gate. The circular alleged that Seferi Yilmaz, the bombed bookstore owner in Semdinli, had links with one of the PKK officials working at this gate. HPJC will file complaint about Seferi Yilmaz and a number of other people who allegedly had connections with the PKK members at the so-called gate.

EVRENSEL: Suicide rates in Bingol province reportedly have proved as serious as the rates in Batman province. 18 people attempted to commit suicide in the last three months.

EVRENSEL: A mine went off when a 31-year-old male stepped on it in a village in Tunceli. The person died instantly at the site of the blast. Tunceli Governor's Office announced that the mine was planted by the PKK.

EVRENSEL: DTP Ankara party organization held a protest activity in Ankara against the investigations started against mayors of the southeastern region. DTP Provincial Party Chairman Murat Sayan reminded that Hakkari Mayor Metin Tekce (see press summary 03/17) and Batman Mayor Huseyin Kalkan have been going through an investigation process and former DEHAP Hakkari provincial chairperson has been arrested recently. Sayan also pointed out that a bomb went off across from the DTP provincial building in Elazig (see press summary 03/27). According to Sayan, the state, which was not been able to exert influence during the Newruz celebrations, has started taking revenge through recent investigations and arrests. Meanwhile DTP Tunceli party organization has also made an announcement to protest the recent developments.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Nearly 2500 people marched in the streets of Hakkari's Yuksekova district to protest the arrests that took place during the demonstration held against arresting of former DEHAP Provincial Chairperson, Sebahattin Suvagci (see press summary 03/27), in Hakkari. The people extended support to Batman and Hakkari mayors and demanded the release of the people jailed.

EVRENSEL: Ankara Prosecutor's Office started an investigation against a Kurdish poster marking March 8 Women's Day despite authorities not allowing the posters to be posted on billboards in the city. The poster reportedly read in Kurdish, "Happy March 8, Hit the streets to stop war and killing of women."

OZGUR GUNDEM: Funerals will be held in four provinces for seven of the fourteen PKK members killed in a military operation last Friday (see press summary 03/27) in Mus. The families who took possession of their dead kin from the Malatya State Hospital have reportedly claimed that there were no bullet wounds on the dead bodies and that the PKK militants have allegedly been killed with chemical weapons. The provinces where the funerals will be held are Diyarbakir, Batman, Siirt and Adana.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Syriac community in Turkey decided to celebrate their 6756-year-old April 1st Spring Festival in Istanbul on April 2. Last year's festival was held in Midyat district of Mardin province. This year, because of the reactions of the Muslim community towards the caricatures of Prophet Mohammed depicted in western media, and also because of the recent deaths of two Syriac religious clergymen, the celebration will not be held in Midyat.

OZGUR GUNDEM: A young person called Hayrettin Sar, who reportedly disappeared three days ago, was found dead in the environs of Sinanli village in Diyarbakir's Bismil district. Six bullets were found in the body of Sar. Sar had previously worked for the youth organizations of HADEP and DEHAP, and he reportedly served one year and nine month of prison sentence when he was convicted of being a PKK member three years ago.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Adana's Third Heavy Penalty Court continued to hear today the case of five police officers who allegedly opened fire at a crowd of young people celebrating Newruz in 2004 in Adana. Officers allegedly seriously shot a youth in the head. The court acquitted the officers in today's hearing on grounds that officers have committed the act as a result of self-defense.

REID